

REMARKS**INTRODUCTION:**

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 2, 5, 14, 15, 18, and 22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 4, 7, 13, 16, 17, 21, 23 and 24 have been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-4, 6-13, 16-17, 19-21 and 23-28 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

In the Office Action, at pages 2-3, claims 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 13, 14, 17, and 19-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bironas et al. (USPN 5,513,268; hereafter, Bironas) in view of Katayama et al. (USPN 6,747,678; hereafter, Katayama). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion on page 3 of the Office Action, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 2, and claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, amended independent claim 1 and claim 3, which depends therefrom, are submitted to be in allowable form.

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion on page 3 of the Office Action, independent claim 4 has been amended to include the features of claim 5, and claim 5 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, amended independent claim 4 and claim 6, which depends therefrom, are submitted to be in allowable form.

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion on page 3 of the Office Action, independent claim 13 has been amended to include the features of claims 14 and 15, and claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, amended independent claim 13 and claim 16, which depends therefrom, are submitted to be in allowable form.

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion on page 3 of the Office Action, independent claim 17 has been amended to include the features of claim 18, and claim 18 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, amended independent claim 17 and claims 19 and 20, which depend therefrom, are submitted to be in allowable form.

Independent claim 7 has been amended to include the feature "wherein, when a sound increase/decrease interval information is input from the command and information input unit, the system control unit stores the sound increase/decrease interval information in the memory when the sound increase/decrease interval is greater than a minimum increase/decrease interval set in the sound output system and less than a maximum increase/decrease interval set in the sound output system."

Independent claim 21 has been amended to include "wherein the sound control unit comprises: a memory in which the volume levels selected by the user are sequentially stored; a command and information input unit that inputs the volume levels selected by the user and the volume control signal with respect to sound output from the sound output system; and a system control unit that sequentially stores the volume levels input from the command and information input unit in the memory and controls the sound output unit such that sound output from the sound output unit is increased/decreased on a basis of the order of the volume levels stored in the memory when the volume control signal is input, wherein when a sound increase/decrease interval information is input from the command and information input unit, the system control unit stores the sound increase/decrease interval information in the memory when the sound increase/decrease interval is greater than a minimum increase/decrease interval set in the sound output system and less than a maximum increase/decrease interval set in the sound output system." Claim 22 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 23 and 24 have been amended to depend from amended claim 21.

The Examiner admits that Bironas does not teach that the user inputs the increase/decrease interval information as the information is predetermined by the curves in figure 5.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Bironas nor Katayama teaches or suggests "wherein, when a sound increase/decrease interval information is input from the command and information input unit, the system control unit stores the sound increase/decrease interval information in the memory when the sound increase/decrease interval is greater than a minimum increase/decrease interval set in the sound output system and less than a maximum increase/decrease interval set in the sound output system," as is recited in amended independent claim 7, and similarly in amended independent claim 21 of the present invention.

Hence, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 7 and 21 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bironas et al. (USPN 5,513,268) in view of Katayama et al. (USPN 6,747,678). Since claims 8, 9, 23 and 24 depend from amended independent claims 7 and 21, respectively, claims 8, 9, 23 and 24 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bironas et al. (USPN 5,513,268) in view of Katayama et al. (USPN 6,747,678) for at least

the reasons that amended independent claims 7 and 21 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bironas et al. (USPN 5,513,268) in view of Katayama et al. (USPN 6,747,678).

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

In the Office Action, at page 3, claims 10-12 and 25-28 were allowed. Claims 2, 5, 15, 16, and 18 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful review of, and allowance of, claims 10-12 and 25-28.

As suggested by the Examiner, the features of claim 2 have been incorporated into claim 1, and claim 2 has been canceled. In addition, the features of claim 5 have been incorporated into claim 4, and claim 5 has been canceled. The features of claims 14 and 15 have been incorporated into claim 13, and claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled. Claim 16 has been amended to depend from amended claim 13. The features of claim 18 have been incorporated into claim 17, and claim 18 has been cancelled.

Independent claims 7 and 21 have been amended as recited above, and are submitted to be allowable for the reasons cited above. Claims 8, 9, 23 and 24 are submitted to be allowable for at least the reasons amended claims 7 and 21 are allowable.

Hence, amended independent claims 1, 4, 7, 13, 17, and 21 are submitted to be in allowable form (see reasons above), and the claims depending therefrom (claims 3, 6, 8, 9, 16, 19, 20, 23, and 24) are also submitted to be in allowable form.

CONCLUSION:

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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